

The Development of Hungarian Tourism Education: The Role of Creativity and Co-operation

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摘要

在這快速變化的世界中，觀光與旅館的高等教育環境中是非常競爭的。為使畢業生增加被雇用機會及能更具有實務知識，學校無不盡其所能增加學生管理方面的技巧及能力已增加學生。在匈牙利，高等教育中的觀光與旅館相關科系已在近年內變的相當受到學生的歡迎。因為學校所提供的學、碩士學位將會對未來國家整體的觀光產業發展有重大影響，因此高等教育的發展應要時常國內外的趨勢接軌。

本研究發現個人的創造力是改革觀光教育的動力而有一適當及支持的制度則是個人的創造力的基礎。而與當地及國際間的接軌是相輔相成的，如何將學生推向國際舞台及增加其就業率是相當重要的，但學生在此行業中的滿足及快樂才是更為重要的。

The Development of Hungarian Tourism Education: The Role of Creativity and Co-operation¹

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Introduction

In a fast-changing world, it is a challenge for higher education institutions in the field of tourism and hospitality to meet the volatile demands of the industry (Kátay, 2005). In addition to provide students with the expected level of factual knowledge, universities and colleges aim to increase their students' employment potential by developing their management skills and competences (Breen, Walo and Dimmock, 2004). In Hungary, tourism and hospitality programmes have become ones of the most popular study programmes in higher education in recent years. Since the effectiveness and efficiency of the tourism and hospitality BA and MA courses will greatly influence the future of the country's tourism industry, there is a constant need for adaptation to the current trends of both the development of the tourism industry and the evolution of international tourism education.

1. Tourism education, creativity and innovation

Tourism is a key sector of both the European and the Hungarian economies. With the changes in consumer expectations, a series of economic crises and an increasingly important focus on the environmental and social aspects of tourism, the future professionals working in this field need to be flexible, innovative and responsive to the changes in their business and societal environment. The current economic crisis is mirrored in the tourist sector which is currently struggling to maintain the economic activity and the employment level and is urgently in need of innovative concepts to boost the tourists' interest (Papatheodorou,

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Rosselló and Xiao, 2010).

Tourism education all around the world has a multidisciplinary nature, encompassing a wide range of knowledge, skills, competences and attitudes (Tribe, 2000). Tourism study programmes at the tertiary level follow different paths globally, depending on the institutional and the national characteristics of the curricula (Tribe, 2002). The expected outcomes also seem to differ to a certain extent from country to country (Cuffy, Tribe and Airey, 2012), with more abstract competences such as high reflexive capacity (Barnett 1997), critical thinking or a search for the truth (Barnett 1990) generally required in countries with longer established tertiary tourism education as opposed to a more practical approach in the emerging markets where a commitment to work hard, up-to-date job skills or a service-minded way of thinking seem to be the predominant expectations of employers (e.g. Tooman, Mürstaja and Holleran, 2007; Shariff, 2011; Rátz and Kátay 2007). In addition, there may be further ambiguity when it comes to the comparative analysis of the perceived and expressed interests and motivations of the tourism students, the interests of the tourism industry, the intentions of the educators and the frameworks imposed by the national education systems (Xiao, 2000; Inui, Wheeler and Lankford, 2006; Marchante, Ortega and Pagán, 2007), some of which will also be discussed in more details in the following chapter of this paper.

Due to the dynamic nature of tourism and the continuously increasing body of knowledge available about the various aspects of the complex phenomenon (Stergiou, Airey and Riley, 2008), tourism education also needs to be constantly renewed and adopted to the current trends and changes. Since creativity and innovation play vital roles in the competitiveness of destinations and the subsequent economic, socio-cultural and physical impacts of tourism development, affecting the quality of life of travellers, residents and businesses alike (Rátz and Michalkó, 2011), the education of future tourism decision-makers must also embody these notions.

Creativity and innovation in education may be reflected by the content of the curriculum as well as by the teaching methods, with the two areas being, to a certain extent, interdependent. Innovation in education, similarly to other services, generally consists of a change of behavioural or organisational aspects as opposed to technological innovation (Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes and Sørensen, 2007), although the introduction of technology-based education methods and course contents related to the fast diffusion of information and communication technologies that have a pervasive impact on the creation and consumption

of the tourist product (Stamboulis and Skayannis, 2003) may represent a fusion of the two directions. It shall be noted though that it is rather challenging to define the exact notion of innovation in education, since new methods and systems that are introduced as a result of imitation may also be considered innovative, either at institutional level or within the national framework of tourism education.

2. Research methods

The aim of the paper is to explore the adaptation of Hungarian tourism education to the current trends in tourism development, with special regard to issues in product development and innovation in Hungarian tourism. The paper is based on the findings of a qualitative research project using content analysis of tourism and hospitality curricula as well as interviews with tourism lecturers working at Kodolányi János University of Applied Sciences (KJU), Székesfehérvár-Budapest, Hungary focusing on the following issues: innovation and creativity in course development including content creation and assessment methods, collaboration with the tourism industry, as well as formal and informal adaptation processes to international tourism education trends. 12 full-time lecturers of the Tourism Department of KJU (80% of total, due to organizational difficulties related to overlapping schedules and various professional obligations of colleagues) participated in the interviews that took place during March-April 2013. Each interview lasted about one hour, using a semi-structured set of questions focusing on the above described issues. The responses were recorded and transcribed, and the method of content analysis was used to explore the main themes and to identify those practices and methods that characterise tourism education development at KJU. The findings indicate that the most important elements are (1) the principles and practices inherited from the development and transformation of the Hungarian higher education system in general, (2) the internationalisation of education, (3) the co-operation with the tourism industry and (4) the creativity demonstrated in course content development.

3. Transformation of tourism education in Hungary

In Hungary, despite long traditions in hospitality programmes, tourism education at university level started with the establishment of the Tourism Research Centre of the Budapest University of Economic Sciences in 1992, followed by the establishment of the KJU in the same year, and the introduction of tourism studies in the catering and hotel

management programme of the College of Commerce and Catering (now Budapest Business School). Ever since, tourism studies have enjoyed a continuous popularity: in 2013 it was again the most sought-after field based on the number of applicants, followed by mechanical engineering and business administration (Oktatási Hivatal, 2013). This popularity has also led to the increase of the number of educational institutions that offer tourism programmes at BA or MA level to 15 in 2013 (18,3% of all accredited higher education institutions in Hungary) (Oktatási Hivatal, 2013).

In the first years of tourism education development in higher education, there was neither an established core curriculum, nor a consensual attempt to develop one (Rátz, 1997). Although there were similar courses in all the important tourism programmes (e.g. geography of tourism, tourism marketing, economics of tourism, tour operations), each programme placed emphasis on different aspects of tourism. Traditionally colleges were supposed to provide much more practical education than universities², so their tourism programmes at the beginning had a strong vocational focus and included courses like ticketing or food preparation, instead of tourism policy or impacts of tourism. University-level education has always been more theoretical (sometimes, also especially at the beginning, even too theoretical), so planning or policy issues have always been considered as essential in these programmes.

International co-operation has been instrumental in the development of Hungarian tourism education since the very beginning (Michalkó, 2007). In the 1990's, most of the newly established institutions were looking for partners abroad, with the objective of filling the gaps in the existing curricula (usually concerned with management, strategic planning, customer care or marketing issues) and harmonizing Hungarian education with the Western European system. The range of co-operation has varied from the adaptation of whole tourism programmes (with external validation and evaluation) to joint development of certain courses or to assistance in staff development by exchange visits or shadow lecturing.

Originally KJU offered a 4-years undergraduate programme in travel and tourism. The curriculum of the 4-year-programme was developed gradually, with an attempt to take into consideration the needs of the labour market. It was a combination of compulsory and

² Before joining the European Higher Education Area and introducing the 3-cycle qualification system (bachelor, master, doctoral degrees), Hungarian colleges offered 3- or 4-year programmes (more or less equal to today's BA or BSc degrees), and universities offered 5- or 6-year programmes (more or less equal to the current MA or MSc degrees). The new framework of qualifications has led to the conversion of most former colleges into universities of applied sciences, offering both BA and MA degrees, while traditional universities have reserved the right to offer doctoral programmes.

elective courses with compulsory specialisation from the second semester of the second year. The original curriculum reflected the aim of adapting the programme to national and international tourism development trends, especially with the introduction of then unique specialisations such as Animation and Ecotourism, but the heritage of traditional higher education was also obvious. During their compulsory studies, students received a thorough education in methodological subjects, economic sciences and history, but various aspects of management and business studies were missing (e.g. operations management, strategic management, human resource management, behavioural studies, communication studies or marketing). One of the reasons of this imbalance was the fact that students finishing the programme received a degree in "economic sciences", so there was obviously a need to provide them with the necessary knowledge.

Joining the European Higher Education Area brought about the implementation of a 3-cycle higher education system and the development of nationally accepted core curricula as well as completion and exit requirements for each study programme (Derényi, 2010), applied to students starting their degree programmes in 2006. These requirements contain, among others, the learning outcomes of each programme in the forms of skills and competences, adopted from the fundamental education philosophy of the EHEA. However, control elements related to programme contents and procedures remaining from the previous degree requirements are also included, such as degree programme modules or subjects, questioning both the purpose of adopting competence-based output requirements and the academic independence of each educational institution. In fact, the completion and exit requirements serve as a central curriculum, leaving only minimal freedom for institutional curriculum development and leading to a quasi-uniformity of Hungarian degree programmes, in contradiction with the original principles of the Bologna Process that define diversity as one of the most important values of the EHEA. Consequently, Hungarian tourism education at university level moved, within a couple of years, from an almost uncoordinated field to an almost perfectly homogenised one where the only available programmes are the following: BA in Tourism and Catering (7 semesters including one semester of internship) and MA in Tourism Management (4 semesters). Nevertheless, the high number of competitors requires all involved institutions to find ways to differentiate their programmes in order to attract applicants in a constantly decreasing market that is affected both by unfavourable demographic trends and by the social, economic and political consequences of the global economic crisis (Hrubos, 2012).

4. The international dimension of tourism education at KJU

By nature, tourism is an international economic activity and a global socio-cultural phenomenon. As a consequence of various political and economic integration processes, labour mobility in the tourism industry is increasing throughout the world, further facilitated by the ease of access for international workers (Riley, 2004). In Europe, the gradually more permeable national and labour market boundaries have led to a growth in numbers of transient workers and increasingly elastic labour market migration (ILO, 2001). A significant proportion of tourism students currently enrolled in a Hungarian higher education institution are harbouring plans to spend more or less time working abroad after graduation. Although the global character of the tourism industry makes bringing an international dimension into tourism education a crucial responsibility all around the world, it is particularly vital in Hungary, a country with a relatively homogenous society with limited opportunities to experience true multiculturalism (Irimiás, 2012a).

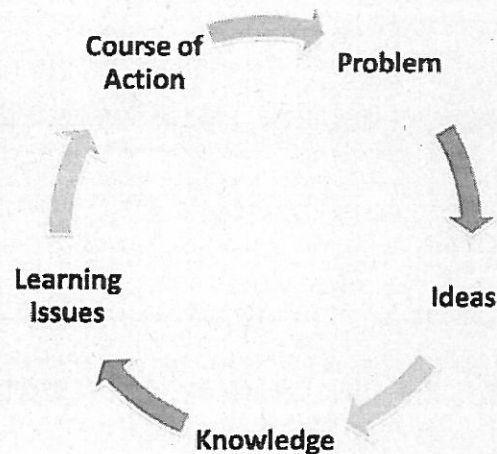
KJU has an extended network of more than 110 international partner universities, both within the European Union and outside. Co-operation with these partners consist of many forms: student and teacher mobility, Erasmus Intensive Programmes (IPs), joint research projects, as well as participation in and organisation of international conferences. A relatively recent tradition in our international activities is the organisation of an International Week: since 2011, all visiting lecturers are invited to come during the IW in spring in order to share their knowledge with those Hungarian students who are unwilling or unable to spend a semester abroad and with those foreign students who are studying at KJU in the spring semester. The programme has become successful as the concentration of international courses offers students a great variety of disciplines and approaches to benefit from.

In addition of the more traditional forms of student mobility, the Tourism Department of KJU has participated in Erasmus IPs since 2010. These 2-week-long intensive programmes are based on the co-operation of universities from several EU countries, aiming to explore relevant and current topics in international tourism from different angles based on a multidisciplinary approach. The rationale of these projects is to facilitate the development of innovative practices in education and their transfer, to improve the quality and increase the volume of co-operation between higher education institutions and enterprises, and to support the development of innovative ICT-based content, services, pedagogies and practice for lifelong learning (European Commission, 2013). Within the framework of the IPs, each

partner university's contribution to the central theme is based on their cultural background and their specific perspective of the concept, creating a synergic added value. Internationalisation is an important part of the curriculum in each partner institution and one of the main focus areas is to improve and increase possibilities for staff exchange and opportunities for student contacts and mobility in international context.

The latest IP organised with the participation of KJU students in The Netherlands during April 2013 (with Dutch, Finnish and Spanish partner universities) focused on the theme '*Entrepreneurship in experiences: tourism and quality of life*'. This IP is a good example of the future direction of tourism education at KJU since it intended to compare and fuse the different approaches in innovation in experience-based tourism, focusing especially on quality of life, using the concepts of wellness, selfness and spirituality. In addition, various approaches in entrepreneurship in relation to the central theme were shared, compared and analysed, in order to create a mutual understanding of content, approaches and new teaching methods. KJU is committed to use and integrate the best practises generated in the IP in its relevant curriculum. The IP's practical orientation is illustrated by the active co-operation between the university partners and the local enterprises: 60% of the work programme consisted of real time assignments carried out with the involvement of the tourist industry in The Netherlands, i.e. the participating students experienced business practices in an international context.

Figure 1

The Problem-based Learning Process used in the international Intensive Programmes³

Source: Erasmus IP 2010-13

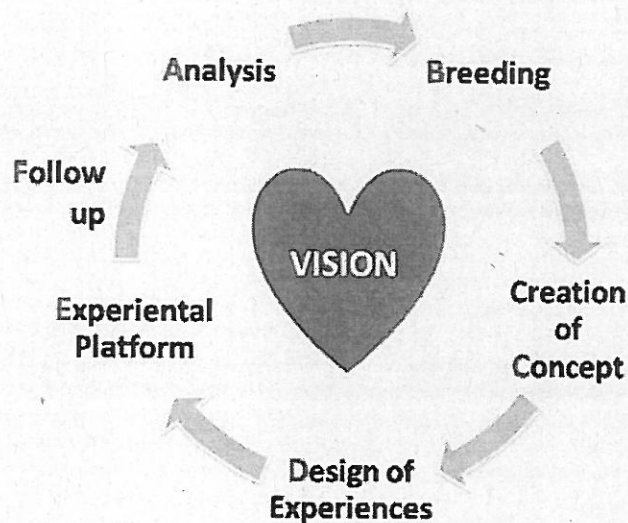
Besides its multicultural aspects, the IP's most significant contribution to the participating universities' education programme development lies in its innovative methodology including problem-based learning (Figure 1), using concepts such as imagineering and emotional innovation in tourist product and experience development (Ojajärvi and Kokko, 2010). Imagineering is a comprehensive methodology to develop and design innovative visions, strategies, concepts and products from an experience perspective (Jetten, 2011). This complex approach of experiential concept and product development in tourism can only be effectively used through a multidisciplinary methodology based on contributions of psychology, sociology, management and tourism studies, with a central focus combining the concepts of imagineering, social responsibility, entrepreneurship and the psychological aspects of the tourist experience.

Since experience creation is a core concept in both the IP in question and in tourism education at KJU in general, it is vital that students become able to analyse, understand and enhance the experience-based elements of a service product in an intercultural setting. To reach this aim, the ABCDEF method (Figure 2) has been used.

³ Figures 1-2 are based on the materials created during within the framework of the 'Entrepreneurship in Experiences: Tourism and Quality of Life' Erasmus Intensive Programme between 2010-2013.

Figure 2

The ABCDEF method of concept and product development



Source: Erasmus IP 2010-13

The method is based on qualitative research methods and includes the following 6 steps:

1. Analysis – Analysis of the demand and supply side of the subject. Imagining the soul, the nature or DNA of the supply side (meaning, identity and image) by trend analysis. Understanding the essence of the experience of user groups (values, motives, motivation). Qualitative research methods are used (focused on why questions). Mood boards are useful tools.
2. Breeding – Development of a subjective and distinguishing vision. Methods are participant observation, key expert interviews, creative techniques (e.g. brainstorming or mind mapping).
3. Creation of a Concept – Transformation of a vision (the dream) into a concept (guiding principle). Understanding of the characteristics of the experience and how to appeal to the imagination of people. Development of an experience concept and an appropriate slogan and or logo to represent the concept.
4. Design of experiences – Development and design of products, services, experiences. Directing the experiences by using animation techniques.

5. Experience platform – Creation of emotional involvement, commitment and loyalty. Development of personal interaction between producer and consumer. Directing the communication and establishing co-creation networks.
6. Follow-up – The implications or the changes of the concept and product development process for the business philosophy, organisation and structures.

5. Practical orientation and industrial co-operation

New divisions of labour in the tourism industry and changes in the nature of jobs are leading to the employment of an increasingly varied range of individuals throughout the sector. Although the diversity of the industry and its subsectors provide working opportunities for a wide array of skills, in recent years there has been a shift within Europe away from specific skills towards more generic competencies (ILO 2001). According to the International Labour Organization (2001), exchanging the concept of qualifications for that of competences is consonant with the idea of the enterprise as a learning organisation. To promote this new concept, the European Working Group on improving training in the tourism industry convened by the European Commission recommended that the possible ways of developing individuals' capacity to make full use of general, technical and personal 'soft' skills should be investigated (European Commission, DG Enterprise, Tourism Unit 2000). The variety of national qualification systems across the European Union and the international nature of the tourism industry also underline the importance of providing tourism and hospitality graduates with the required skills and competencies. Consequently, the significance of the presented research project lies in its contribution to the development of more effective and efficient education programmes that are able to increase Hungarian tourism graduates' employment potential (Rátz and Kátay, 2007).

In addition to the formal, classroom-based education programme, many different approaches have been introduced at KJU to increase the practical orientation of the learning process. Recognising that an important, although relatively underrated aspect of tourism education is learning through travel, study tours and field visits are included in the course curricula, in order to familiarize students with various practical aspects of the tourism industry. Of course, learning resulting from tourist experiences is likely to be personal and linked to individual motivations and prior experiences and knowledge (Falk et al, 2012). However, the activity of travelling may have a unique contribution to one's learning process in the case of tourism students participating in professionally planned site visits and study

tours, accompanied by their lecturers: the structural and conceptual framework created for each such visit may help students acquire a practice-oriented knowledge experienced through theory-based observation and learning.

In order to prepare students for their internship throughout the first three years of the programme, 20-60-hour-long in-semester practices have been included in the curriculum since 2004, in the framework of which students can freely choose from a variety of professional activities such as involvement in event organization and management, participation in research projects, data collection and analysis or attendance at workshops and conferences.

Although, as it has been discussed earlier in this paper, the centrally defined completion and exit requirements of the Hungarian tourism BA and MA programmes limit significantly institutional creativity in course development, considerable attempts are made to introduce original and inspirational contents. Real-life case studies are used in many courses in order to illustrate industry processes and activities, industry representatives are invited to share their experiences with our students in a variety of topics from the operation of Tourist Destination Management (TDM) networks to the representation and protection of authors' (e.g. composers, musicians, etc.) rights in the context of hotel and restaurant management. Learning techniques based on group decision-making are used in several courses to stimulate students' managerial and co-operation skills and help them apply theoretical knowledge in practical situations. The success of this approach is demonstrated by the recognition received by KJU's *'Project Management in Tourism'* course in the Hungarian Tempus Foundation's *'Raising Awareness of Lifelong Learning Strategies – E&T2020 in Hungary'* project (Tempus Foundation, 2012). Out of 31 applications, 5 were selected as the best examples of innovative practices based on the combination of practical and theoretical approaches and the co-operation of higher education and industry.

Evidently, the most important practice-oriented component of our tourism education curriculum is the one-semester internship concluding the degree programme. The primary purpose of an internship is to provide the student with hands-on education and professional work experience. Consequently, both KJU and the selected company's HR department are responsible for offering meaningful and useful practical experiences as well as educational benefits for the students, while, at the same time, generating added value for the company (Kátay and Rátz, 2012).

In addition, internship programmes present a wide range of advantages for both

students and participating companies: typically hotels and resorts, travel agencies and tour operators, airlines, DMOs, visitor attractions as well as event and conference organisers. On the one hand, the practical professional experience acquired by the students improves their employment chances and helps them plan their future career path in the industry. The companies, on the other hand, are able to recruit the most suitable candidates, maintain their links with the education sector, their most important source of new labour, and have the opportunity to decrease pressure on their permanent staff by delegating routine job responsibilities to interns or employing students in peak seasons.

Participation in internship schemes generates an encounter between two slightly different attitude systems: undergraduate students are often seen as unpractical, inexperienced and too academically-oriented, while the representatives of the industry are sometimes considered overly practical and narrow-minded, with little interest in theoretical approaches. Due to the globalisation of the tourism industry, internship programmes are increasingly more likely to create the meeting of different national cultures as well (Rátz and Sárdi, 2007), with more and more students willing to do their compulsory industry placement abroad. Interns in a multinational context also have to be prepared for meetings between the generally quite homogeneous tourist culture and the rather heterogeneous residual culture (Jafari, 2007), in addition to the culturally influenced encounters of business philosophies and practices.

In order to better understand the evaluation and perceptions of our students' performance as tourism industry interns as well as to become able to co-operate with our industrial partners more effectively, we have been carrying out a survey among the partner companies since 2006 (Rátz and Kátay, 2007). As the findings in Table 1 indicate, while the participating employers seemed to be satisfied with the students' learning abilities and cognitive skills, the survey results confirmed that study programmes needed to incorporate practical components in the form of internship or other form of specialised workplace training, in order to develop the graduates' performance and commitment (reflected by their contentiousness, perseverance, and ability and willingness to accept responsibility and extra workloads). Employers, on the other hand, were recommended to take advantage of the interns' strong learning abilities and interpersonal skills, and focus their induction and training programmes on developing graduates' unsatisfactory management skills (such as analytical and combination skills or decision-making and organisational abilities).

Table 1

Significance and perception of interns' skills and competencies in Hungarian tourism

Importance of skills Interns' perceived skills	Relatively unimportant		Very important
	Mean<4.00	$4.00 \leq \text{Mean} \leq 4.50$	$4.50 < \text{Mean}$
Unsatisfactory Mean<3.00		Ability to organise work Professional experience	
$3.00 \leq \text{Mean} \leq 3.50$	Quantitative skill Argumentation skills	Logical thinking Combination skill Comprehensive view Analytical skill Stamina Personal balance Stress resistance Practical approach Task-orientation Focusing skill Professional knowledge Familiarity and compliance with rules Ability to deliver clear messages Improvisation skills Self-criticism Conflict management skills Intercultural awareness Decision-making ability Result-orientation Decisiveness Planning skills	Contentiousness Ability to take extra workload Ability to accept responsibility

Satisfactory Mean>3.50	Critical attitude	Learning skill	<i>Precision</i>
	Sense of humour	Positive disposition	<i>Perseverance</i>
		Enthusiasm	<i>Ability to</i>
		Flexibility	<i>understand orders</i>
		Ability to collect and process information	<i>Foreign language proficiency</i>
		Written communication skills	<i>Ability to understand others</i>
		Non-verbal communication skills	<i>Verbal communication skills</i>
		Self-confidence	<i>Co-operation skills</i>
		Self-control	<i>Helpfulness</i>
		Self-development	<i>Honesty</i>
		Adaptability	<i>Reliability</i>
		Ability to compromise	
		Loyalty	
		Openness	
		Ability to learn from errors Success-orientation	

Source: Kátay and Rátz, 2012

6. Creativity and co-operation in course development

Although the nationally defined completion and exit requirements of tourism education programmes reduce institutional autonomy in course content development, KJU attempts to ensure the representation of current international and national trends in tourism research as well as product development in the curriculum of both the BA and the MA programmes. Since the Tourism Department is actively involved in research, especially in the areas of tourism geography, cultural and heritage tourism development, and tourism and quality of life, the findings of these research projects are immediately included in compulsory modules and are used to introduce new elective courses. The results of two decades of research in the field of tourism geography, for example, has changed completely the directions and approaches used in all our courses related to spatial thinking (Michalkó et al, 2006).

Formal co-operation with external organisations may also contribute to the enhancement of KJU's tourism programmes, in terms of both content and methodology. The Tourism Geography Thematic Group of the Hungarian Geographical Society was founded at KJU in 2010, based on the scientific reputation achieved in the field. The Group organises a series of elective lectures each semester, making the advanced scientific results of current Hungarian tourism geography research available for interested university students. This kind of network-level innovation (Sundbo, Orfila-Sintes and Sørensen, 2007) based on co-operation is able to create a competitive advantage for the university, and immediate imitation by other educational institutions is hindered by the fact that the development of similar co-operation necessitates time and is strongly influenced by personal-professional relationships.

Hungary has strong traditions in stimulating university students' research activities: National Scientific Students' Associations are active at most higher education institutions and the biannual Conference organised by these Associations is the largest and most significant national competition in undergraduate and graduate level research, with 4628 papers presented in 16 sessions in 2013 (OTDT, 2013). In order to prepare our students for the competitions and ensure their successful participation, various elective programmes are organised to familiarise them with the latest trends of international tourism research and to improve their methodological skills and competences. During the last years, these research-oriented courses have covered topics in depth from the heritage of explorers and the characteristics of today's travellers and tourists through the use of urban space and place in tourism development to the concept and characteristics of active tourism.

The latter course illustrates the fact that, in addition to building course contents based on the international trends in tourism research and product development, the unique national characteristics of the Hungarian tourism industry are also taken into consideration. Active tourism as a tourist product has been in the forefront of Hungarian national tourism policy throughout the last decade (Rátz and Vizi, 2007). The active tourism product, however, exists as a specifically Hungarian notion (the international tourism literature sources mainly refer to '*adventure tourism*', '*sport tourism*' or '*active holidays*'): as an umbrella concept, it incorporates a wide range of highly different tourism products with consumers' physical activity as their single common feature. However, there is a conceptual vagueness characterising the definition of active tourism in the tourism literature. 'Active tourism' as such is a relatively infrequently used term by researchers, probably due to its complexity and

the inherent difficulties arising from classifying such a wide variety of activities as one single product. Although practitioners – particularly marketing officers, tourism developers, and other local and regional decision makers – tend to refer to ‘active tourism development’ more regularly (e.g. Wieczorek, 1999), the concept often overlaps with ecotourism (Furlan et al, 2004), rural tourism (Breda et al, 2006), nature tourism (Lennon et al, 2006), health tourism (Steward, 2005) or sport tourism (Turco, Riley and Swart, 2002).

In contrast to the specifically Hungarian notion of active tourism, other courses aim to introduce yet virtually unknown or non-existent international trends to the domestic market. One example that illustrates this attempt is the recently developed specialisation in film-induced tourism. In this field, Hungary seems to be in a slightly controversial position: although the country, and especially the capital city, Budapest, have been popular shooting locations for international filmmakers for many years, and film as an art form plays an important role in Hungarian culture, the current development of film-induced tourism is significantly below its potential level (Irimiás 2011). The underdevelopment may be attributed to the fact Budapest almost never appears as itself in the movies: due to its versatile architecture, the city has been used as Buenos Aires, Berlin, Moscow or Paris, among others (Irimiás 2012b). This also means that filmmakers deliberately hid the capital’s distinctive architectural monuments and spectacular views over the river Danube, using instead indistinguishable urban areas as backgrounds to their stories and mixing them with the key attractions of the official story locations. As a consequence, Hungarian tourism does not benefit yet from the active presence of the international film industry in the country. The new course, therefore, aims to familiarise students with the international principles and practices of film-induced tourism (Beeton, 2005) and challenge participants to envision ways to develop this product within the country, resulting, for example, in the creation of a Budapest movie map.

Conclusions

The research findings based on qualitative interviews with KJU Tourism Department staff members suggest that innovation in tourism education is highly dependent on individual creativity; however, the successful realisation of personal initiatives is only possible within a supportive institutional setting. Although local regulations and frameworks may sometimes limit organisational flexibility, it is necessary to create planning and development systems that are able to balance compliance and creativity.

In order to ensure that both the contents and the methodology of tourism curricula remain up-to-date, it is crucial to follow international trends in tourism research and in product development, and to introduce global knowledge into local programmes. However, it is advisable to adapt new ideas to the reality of the given country, taking into consideration economic, socio-cultural and physical characteristics as well. It is often a challenge though to prepare students for the national and for the global labour market at the same time, due to different traditions of tourism development and dissimilar expectations of tourism businesses. Then again, this challenge highlights the importance of the international dimension of tourism education, similarly to the significance of co-operation at both local and international level in order to facilitate an effective and efficient exchange of ideas and knowledge.

It is important to remember that the one of the major reasons behind innovation in tourism education programmes is to increase the competitiveness of graduates in the labour market, not only by improving their employability, but also ensuring that they are able to find satisfaction and happiness in their careers. Consequently, a further stage of this research project shall include a study of our tourism graduates' professional paths in order to explore in more details the impacts of our study programmes and to identify further areas of development.

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